

Gulf of Mexico Flooding Events

Date of Declaration/Determination: August 7, 1998

The flooding occurred during March and April 1997, with effects felt in the fishery through October 1997.

Location: Louisiana and Mississippi

Description/Cause: Due to opening of the Bonnet Carre spillway in response to natural weather events.

Authority: Sec 312 (a) of MSA

Appropriation: FY 1997 Emergency Supplemental, June 12, 1997--
\$3.5 million (\$2 million used to address floods)

State Match	\$.67 million
Total	\$2.67 million

Assistance Provided:

Louisiana and Mississippi each received \$1 million in Federal assistance due to flooding that affected their brown shrimp fisheries. The States used the grants for research and other activities, but these did not involve cooperative efforts with fishermen.

Congress appropriated funds for assistance to address both flooding and red tide events in the Gulf region, in advance of NMFS deciding if these events constituted a commercial fishery failure resulting from a fishery resource disaster, as MSA 312(a) requires. Subsequently, NMFS determined that there was a commercial failure of the Louisiana and Mississippi brown shrimp fisheries, but the data did not support a commercial failure of Gulf fisheries due to red tide. NMFS therefore requested approval from the Congress to make \$1.5 million of the funds available to the Gulf States under section 402(d) of the MSA, which authorizes funding "data collection or other activities," for research on red tide. The 25% match requirement was retained for the work done under section 402(d).

The States do not keep data on the number of months that fishermen work before or after a disaster. Furthermore, many Gulf fishermen have multiple permits and may have moved into other fisheries.